

Otis's Cabinet of Curiosities

By

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Pilot - Who Lives There

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FADE IN

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - A RUNDOWN VICTORIAN MANSION
SURROUNDED BY WOODS - OVERCAST DAY

Rain is pouring.

LONG SHOT - OPPOSITE - ROAD LEADING TO MANSION - DAY

A CAR pulls in and stops. A man (HENRY) and woman (CLAIRE)
climb out, holding umbrellas. They hold the umbrellas over
a teen girl (ALICE) holding a duffel bag.

CUT TO

ANGLE CLOSER

Henry goes to get another suitcase out of the trunk of the
car while Alice and her mom look at the mansion.

CUT TO

POV MANSION

The mansion looks at its worst, dark, grey, rundown and
lonely.

CUT TO

CLOSE ON CLAIRE AND ALICE

Huddles under the umbrella, Alice does not look impressed.

ALICE

Guys, not to criticize but this
does not look too vacationy.

CLAIRE

You're not seeing it at its best.

ALICE

Does it change into a palace in the
sunlight?

CLAIRE

The best part is inside.

(CONTINUED)

HENRY

Good. Let's get there fast. I'm drowning!

CUT TO

TITLE CREDITS SEQUENCE

CUT TO

INT. OTIS'S MANSION - ENTRANCE HALL -DAY

The inside is dark and filled with old furniture, covered with an eclectic collection of mismatched objects. An antique vase shares a shelf with an array of cheap plastic toys. A venetian mirror hangs over a stuffed squirrel under glass.

CLAIRE

I spent many happy summers here.

Alice gives her a 'really?' look.

ALICE

Wasn't it lonely?

CLAIRE

Oh no there are...there were many children in the village to play with.

Alice stares reproachfully.

CLAIRE

Look. It's only for three weeks. Then we will come back.

Still staring.

CLAIRE

(sighs)

If it was just a road trip I would love to take you along, but we are looking for artifacts along the way, and then your dad and I will be working! There's just going to be too much waiting around dull places for you to enjoy yourself. We've been over that!

(CONTINUED)

ALICE
Yeah, I know...

CLAIRE
(proudly)
Small price to pay when your dad is
a rocket scientist.

She looks at Henry, smiling. Henry smiles back.

HENRY
(lovingly)
And your mom a paleontologist.

They kiss. Alice rolls her eyes. This banter is obviously routine.

ALICE
I hate having to explain what you
do all the time...Everyone thinks
I'm making it up.

She starts mimicking an imaginary conversation as her parents keep kissing.

ALICE
'Your father does not really work
for NASA.' Yes, yes he does. He's
doing tests on the new Mars rover.
'And where does he go for that?
Does he go to Mars, ha ha?' No, as
a matter of fact Devon island in
Nunavut is used for that.

Disgusted look at her parents still hugging.

ALICE
'What does your mother think of all
this?' Oh, my mom loves it, gives
her an excuse to go digging for
dinosaurs where no one has dug
before because...

OTIS (O.S.)
One looks toward the future and one
toward the past!

A tall skinny man comes out of the shadows.

OTIS
What a wonderful way to experience
the present...Claire, my dear, what
a divine pleasure it is to see you
again!

He kisses Claire on the cheek, shakes Henry's hand, and ends in front of Alice.

OTIS

And Alice! You look just like your mother did at your age! Do you remember coming here when you were younger?

HENRY

Come on Otis she was just a toddler.

CUT TO

INT FLASHBACK DAY

Little Alice (5 years old) is standing in an old-fashioned kitchen. The basement door stands ajar.

OTIS (O.S.)

Don't go in the basement.

ALICE

Why? Are there monsters?

OTIS (O.S.)

Hahah. No. Of course not, but I have a lot of boxes there and they could fall on you.

CUT TO

ANGLE ON ALICE

Alice stares at the door.

CUT TO

ANGLE ON BASEMENT DOOR

The door starts to close by itself. Just before it clicks shut, a pair of small bright eyes flash.

CUT TO

INT. SAME KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

OTIS
Anyway! Must you go?

CLAIRE
Yes, sorry, we are running behind.

HENRY
(hamming it up)
So, off I go, to fake Mars!

CLAIRE
And I, to dig dino bones!

OTIS
(aside to Claire)
and, of course, that one little
thing...

CLAIRE
Bien sur!

CUT TO

ANGLE ON OUTSIDE DOOR

SFX
Door slams

DISSOLVE TO

SAME DOOR TODAY - LATE SUMMER

TRUCK AND PAN through the same kitchen and END ON Alice
is pouring herself a coffee.

OTIS (O.S.)
I'm off to town!

ALICE
What? But you said you would drive
me to school for my first day!

OTIS (O.S.)
I know puppet, but it's an
emergency. This crate is waiting
for me at the train station.

(CONTINUED)

ALICE

I'm sure the crate can handle
waiting a while longer?

OTIS (O.S.)

Maybe, but the station master
can't.

ALICE

What is it this time? The crate
smells? The crate is moving by
itself? The crate is speaking in
tongues?

OTIS pops his head in.

OTIS

Yes, how did you know?

ALICE

(exasperated groan)

You'd think he would be used to it
by now.

OTIS

Ah well can't be helped. Thanks for
being a trooper. Remember to feed
Baraka.

CUT TO

ANGLE ON OUTSIDE DOOR

Otis hurries out distractedly.

SFX

Door slams

CUT TO

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT BACK OF HOUSE AND GROUNDS - MORNING

CAMERA FOLLOWS Alice as she skips down the back porch steps,
past a lawn, large shed, a garage with hints of vintage
vehicles inside, and a parked WWII plane, to...

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

Alice opens the fence and walks in.

She cuts and picks up two enormous heads of lettuce and pulls several carrots from the ground.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Now with an armload of vegetables, she goes to the old stables nearby.

She dumps her load near the door, and goes to it to slide back the bolt.

ALICE
Baraka...Baraka honey are you
awake?

Alice slides open the door.

ALICE
Baraka?

She leans inside.

Suddenly a huge silhouette explodes out!

A STEGOSAUR enthusiastically nuzzles Alice, throwing her off-balance.

BARAKA stops to sniff around. Something smells good! He finds the vegetables and starts devouring them enthusiastically.

ALICE
Baraka! You know you're supposed to
wait to eat inside!

Alice looks around.

ALICE
I think we're okay.

She rubs the dinosaur's shoulder with affection.

ALICE
You big goof.

She looks at her watch.

(CONTINUED)

ALICE
Oops. Back on schedule. Come on big
guy!

Baraka looks up hopefully, licking his chops. The vegetables
are all gone.

Alice points back to the stable.

ALICE
Back in you go!

BARAKA
Braaack!

It is not what is supposed to happen. Baraka steps toward
the meadow to show Alice.

ALICE
No, no walkies. We'll just have to
do it later.

Baraka turns his back to her. Alice is so silly.

ALICE
Baraka...! Come here!

No.

ALICE
Baraka! Here!

No.

Alice pats her pockets, finds something and pulls it out.
She waves it around.

Baraka sniffs. Something smells good!

ALICE
Baraka...? I got a cinnamon
stick...!

Baraka turns around. This is more like it!

Alice waves the stick.

ALICE
You want it? You want it boy?

Baraka creeps forward.

ALICE
Come and get it!

She throws the stick back in the stable, and Baraka runs after it.

Alice slides the door shut.

ALICE
I'll make it up to you I promise!

CUT TO

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT BACK OF HOUSE AND GROUNDS - MORNING

Alice runs back toward the house.

Alice runs up the porch, peeling off clothes.

The door slams open and shut.

A beat.

The door slams open and shut again.

Alice barrels down the steps, now wearing a school uniform.

She runs around the corner of the house and...

comes out again, now riding a bicycle as fast as the wind. she cuts through the meadow, disturbing a flock of birds. One of them flies towards the screen. it is in fact a FAIRY.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING - SAINT THOMAS SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

An old fashioned brick building. The last of the students are going in.

Alice rolls into FOREGROUND, stops to catch her breath.

ALICE
Shoot!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Everybody is talking while the teacher is going over attendance.

The door opens.

Alice comes in with a piece of paper. She hands it in to the teacher (middle aged ex-hippy type woman) who looks at it and makes a tick in her attendance book.

She suddenly looks up exasperated.

TEACHER
Everybody shut up!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - OPPOSITE ANGLE

Everybody looks up, startled. They all focus on the new girl.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Alice stares back at everyone.

TEACHER
Since I have your attention, please
welcome your new classmate,
Alice...Bay-ee-jolly?

ALICE
Baiejolie.

TEACHER
You just moved here?

ALICE
This summer.

TEACHER
Your parents work here?

ALICE
Em...no, they were supposed to work
in Nunavut.

TEACHER
(embarrassed)
Oh, I see. Well.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK MONTAGE OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Various newspaper pages float on the screen, showing titles:
Missing parents!

Mysterious disappearance of
scientist couple!

Search for missing scientists
called off!

Orphan daughter stays with
godfather !

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

TEACHER

Right! Just find a seat and let's
get started.

Embarrassed, Alice sits at the only seat available, at the
front.